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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 Lessons Learned, HEADQUARTERS, 14TH AVIATION BATTALION
 APO San Francisco 96238

AVGD-BC

11 10 Feb 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report, for Quarterly Period Ending 31 Jan 1967.
 (RCS CSFOR - 65)

(12) 23b.

APR 30 1968

TO: Commanding Officer
 17th Aviation Group
 ATTN: AVGD-SC
 APO 96240

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SECTION 1 (C) SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATION OR UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. (C) General

a. The mission of the 14th Aviation Battalion is to provide general aviation support to Free World Military Assistance Forces and the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces in the II Corps Tactical Zone of Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Phu Bon Provinces of the Republic of Vietnam; and to provide aviation support to the United States military and civilian advisory effort in I and II Corps.

b. Major organizational change during this quarter was the assignment of the 196th Aviation Medium Helicopter Company to the 14th Aviation Battalion. The advance party for this company arrived in-country on 22 January 1967. The main body is due to arrive during the last half of February 1967. Details of their experience in preparation for overseas movement (PCM) will be included in the next report. This unit is scheduled to be stationed at Camp Lane, An Son, Vietnam.

c. The 174th Aviation Company made a tactical move during this period. The company arrived in the vicinity of Ninh Hoa (BP997842) on 30 January. The 409th TC Detachment(-) attached to the 174th Aviation Company remained at Camp Lane. Major difficulties encountered during this move will be described in the next report.

d. Information as to location and aircraft assets at the close of this reporting period is as follows:

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NO AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>HQ LOCATION</u>
HHD, 14th Avn Bn 14th Sec Plat	1 U-6A	Camp Lane, An Son (BR948266)
161st Avn Co 406th TC Det 449th Sig Det 756th Med Det	20 UH-1D, 8 UH-1B(A)	Camp Lane, An Son
174th Avn Co 452nd Sig Det 409th TC Det	21 UH-1D, 7 UH-1C(A)	Ninh Hoa (BP997843) Camp Lane, An Son
196th Avn Co (advance party only)		Camp Lane, An Son
282nd Avn Co 484th TC Det 504th Sig Det	18 UH-1D, 7 UH-1B, 1 U-6A	Da Nang Marble Mt

e. LTC William Ponder assumed command of this battalion on 15 November 1966.

f. Transportation and Signal Detachments remain attached to each aviation company to facilitate aircraft and avionics maintenance support.

2. (C) Operations and training activities

a. Plans

(1) A new physical security plan was prepared. The plan provides for:

- (a) Access to Camp Lane.
- (b) Security barriers.
- (c) Protective bunkers and towers.
- (d) Power supplies.
- (e) Communications.
- (f) Guard forces.

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- (g) Reaction force.
- (h) Weapons and ammunition security.
- (i) Personnel security measures.
- (j) Disaster Plan.
- (k) Civil disturbances.
- (l) Evacuation and destruction of sensitive material.

(2) A defense plan was implemented in November. This plan has been fully coordinated with elements of the Capital ROK Infantry Division and the 1/30 US Artillery.

(3) Coordination has been made with Qui Nhon Support Command to provide gun ship and flare ship support in the defense of Qui Nhon Support Command.

b. Operations

(1) This battalion has been engaged in combat or combat support operations every day of this reporting period.

(2) The 161st and 174th Aviation Companies of this battalion participated in the following operations during this period.

<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>SUPPORTED UNIT</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Adams	1st Bde, 4th US Inf	1 Nov - 17 Nov 20 Nov - 8 Dec
Maing Ho 6	Capital ROK Inf Div (CRID)	1 - 9 Nov
Maing Ho 7	CRID	11 - 25 Nov
Phi Long 511	22nd ARVN Inf Div	13 - 15 Dec
Tae Pong 3	CRID	17 - 20 Dec
Bun Gai 66-11	CRID	16 - 23 Dec
Bi Ma I	9th ROK Inf Div	20 - 28 Dec
Bi Ma II	9th ROK Inf Div	23 - 30 Dec
Chong Song	CRID	3 Jan (continuing)

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<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>SUPPORTED UNIT</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Ma Du I	9th ROK Inf Div	21 Jan (continuing)
Beak Ma I	9th ROK Inf Div	29 Jan (continuing)

(3) The 282nd Aviation Company, in addition to providing support for the advisory effort in I and II Corps Areas, reinforced the 52nd Aviation Battalion in Operation Paul Revere IV in November.

(4) In addition to providing combat and logistical troop and cargo support, the 161st and 174th Aviation Companies participated in twenty-six airmobile assault operations.

(5) During the period of this report this battalion provided general support to the Capital ROK Infantry Division, the 9th (White Horse) ROK Infantry Division, and the advisory efforts in I and II Corps areas. The battalion also reinforced the I Field Force Vietnam Flight Detachment and the 10th Aviation Battalion in support of the 1st Brigade, 4th US Infantry Division. The battalion also supported VIP itineraries, Qui Nhon Support Command, IFTV Artillery Units, and Recondo School occasionally during the period of this report.

(6) During this past quarter the three aviation companies have accomplished these results:¹

	<u>AIRCRAFT FLYING HOURS</u>	<u>TROOPS/PASSENGERS</u>	<u>CARGO TONS</u>
November	5,649	44,737	3,124
December	5,004	42,766	3,150
January	5,026	39,572	2,423

	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>AVERAGE AVIATOR HOURS</u>
November	23,801	76.8
December	20,857	63.3
January	21,291	59.5

(7) Forty-six ground fire incidents against aircraft of this battalion were reported during this quarter.² Nineteen aircraft were actually hit during this period with one to five hits per aircraft. The largest projectile striking any aircraft in flight was .30 caliber. One aircraft was damaged by mine or grenade fragments on approach for landing. No aircraft was lost to hostile fire during this period. The only in-flight casualties were two WIA.³

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(8) The weather had minor impact on operations during this period of the monsoon. A total of 530 sorties were cancelled and 330 sorties were delayed because of weather. Cancellations represent .8 of 1% of all sorties. Delays represent .5 of 1% of all sorties.

(9) Airmobile assault operations with the 9th ROK Infantry Division enabled the units of the battalion to obtain their first experience in large scale rappelling into landing zones. Landing zones had to be cleared after personnel rappelled into the area.

(a) During Operation Ma Du I, the landing zone that was to be cleared by rappellers was not cleared adequately for one UH-1D after eight hours. Only one hour was contemplated to clear this landing zone. One company was scheduled to be airlifted into this landing zone. A second landing zone planned for clearing was inaccessible because of weather.

(b) During the subsequent Operation Beak Ma I, five landing zones were planned that required rappelling and clearing operations. However, on D day only three of the landing zones were used because of density altitude. The supported unit for this operation planned to clear these landing zones in four hours. The first adequate landing zone was ready after five hours, the second after eight and one half hours and the third was not ready until D+1. Bomb damage aided in the clearing of the first landing zone.

(c) The supported unit was advised that planning figures for clearing landing zones in both operations were unrealistic. Also, the ground unit was advised that more suitable landing zones were within one thousand meters.

(d) Bomb strikes to aid in the clearing of proposed landing zones was unsuccessful except for one landing zone. This was because the proposed landing zones were situated atop pinnacles and razor back ridgelines and bombs missing the target would strike far down-slope on excessive inclines.

(e) The excessive time to clear landing zones appears to be a lack of proper equipment. The primary means seems to be by blasting. One landing zone was cleared by blasting and machetes.

(10) Airmobile operations during this period provided the Korean Free World Forces with their first experience in using CH-47 helicopters and airlifting of artillery batteries.

(a) The ROK Divisions do not have adequate sling and net equipment and this occasionally causes unavoidable delays in displacements. Attempts to assist the ROK Divisions in obtaining this equipment have been unproductive.

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(b) The ROK Divisions have increased the functional utilization of the CH-47 as their experience factor increases. Guidance through our liaison activities has been the biggest factor in the improved use of the CH-47 helicopters.

c. Training

(1) All units completed familiarization firing of individual and crew served weapons. Each unit was required to conduct familiarization firing in November and December. Effective 1 January this requirement was reduced to a quarterly requirement. However, all newly assigned personnel are required to zero their weapon and fire familiarization within seven days after arriving in their assigned unit. No one is allowed to assume primary duties involving use of an individual or crew served weapon until he has locally familiarized himself with the weapon.

(2) The training area for helicopter weapons systems located within the Capital ROK Infantry Division's (CRID) TAOR has been invaluable in training new helicopter crew members and maintaining weapons familiarization.

(3) Training of ROK Army Aviators and enlisted mechanics.

(a) In November this battalion received eleven Korean officers and nine enlisted men for the purpose of conducting rotary wing familiarization training. All individuals had only fixed wing aircraft experience.

(b) During November and December the aviators received twenty-five hours of flight training with battalion instructor pilots. The aviator training was initially to consist of ten hours of familiarization flying and fifteen hours of flying as co-pilot on service missions. The mechanics were to receive maintenance on-the-job training.

(c) The program has had two extensions. The original program scheduled for thirty days was extended an additional thirty days and subsequently extended indefinitely.

(d) The increased time to conduct this training gave the opportunity to re-evaluate the training being given. It was determined that the aviators needed more fundamental training to increase their basic knowledge of rotary wing flight. Beginning in January training centered on ground school instruction. This instruction started with twenty-four hours of English to enable the students to better understand oral instruction. The USAKV Checklist for the UH-1 and the USAKV Standardization Guide have been translated into Korean. A copy of each has been provided each officer. Ground school instruction has been scheduled for one half day, six days per week.

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(e) At their present stage of proficiency the Korean aviators are capable of performing a pre-flight inspection of the UH-1D and could return the aircraft to a safe landing if all other conditions were favorable. With supervision they can:

- 1 Start and stop the engine.
- 2 Hover and execute hovering turns.
- 3 Perform routine flight maneuvers.
- 4 Perform the duties of a co-pilot.

(f) These aviators are not qualified or proficient rotary wing pilots. At their stage of training, they know just enough to be very dangerous if not properly supervised. However, with additional understanding derived from the ground school and repeated exposure to service missions the aviators proficiency will no doubt improve.

(4) In January the battalion proposed to the Capital ROK Infantry Division that a Helicopter Orientation Course be initiated.

(a) The purpose of this course would be to familiarize selected individuals in the following areas:

1 General helicopter orientation on the capabilities, characteristics, performance, utilization and safety of the UH-1D and CH-47.

2 Helicopter loading to include all aspects of internal and external loads for UH-1D and CH-47.

3 Rigging of sling loads to include:

- a Cargo.
- b Unusual loads.
- c M-55, 1/4 ton vehicle, and 3/4 ton vehicle.
- d Hand and arm signals.

() Lesson plans were prepared by this battalion and subsequently translated into Korean by the Koreans. Korean personnel will conduct the instruction assisted by battalion liaison personnel.

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(c) Training aids used are:

- 1 Cargo net with sling assembly.
- 2 A salvaged UH-1D cabin section mounted on skids with a wooden floor.
- 3 One 105mm howitzer.
- 4 Ammunition pasteboard containers.
- 5 Empty C ration cases.
- 6 Five gallon fuel cans.
- 7 Fifty-five gallon barrels.
- 8 Fortification material.

(5) Intensive training of 81mm mortar crews of the 14th Security Platoon was conducted during the period of this report.

(6) A night training program was initiated by the 174th Aviation Company for all aviators. Purpose of the training is to maintain proficiency in night operations and consists of one hour of classroom instruction and one and one half hours of flying.

(7) The 174th Aviation Company conducted classroom and live firing instruction in the newly acquired XM-21 (mini-gun) system. The unit had this system installed on three UH-1Cs during January.

(8) A fourteen hour block of instruction on the TAERS system was conducted by the 161st Aviation Company during this period.

(9) The inability to keep aircraft available for training and not committed for service missions seriously hampered the training of newly arrived aviators and replacement instructor pilots during this period. During November and December when there was a large influx of new warrant officers direct from flight school in-country orientation was prolonged for excessive periods. Required standardization rides were delayed also because aircraft were not available. Certain items required for a complete in-country orientation and standardization ride cannot be performed on a service mission.

(10) All aircraft on missions requiring two or more aircraft are encouraged to fly formation. This has proved invaluable as a training vehicle for new aviators and formation flying.

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(11) Mandatory training as required by higher headquarters was performed.

d. Psywar

(1) In December the 174th Aviation Company donated over 300 pounds of toys, school books, shoes and candy to the children in orphanages and to the children of the men of the 321st POL Company, Army of the Republic of Vietnam. In January the company donated an additional 300 pounds of toys, school books, shoes and candy to the children of An Son, Vietnam.

(2) In November battalion medical personnel provided emergency medical aid to the village of An Son, Vietnam during a cholera and plague epidemic.

e. Aviation Safety

(1) During the period of this report the battalion suffered six major and one minor aircraft accidents.⁶ Pilot error was the primary cause in all accidents except one which resulted from combination of material failure and maintenance.

(2) Two fatalities resulted from the accident caused by material failure and maintenance.

3. (C) Logistics

a. Aircraft availability during this quarter was as follows:⁴

	<u>UH-1B/D</u>	<u>UH-1B/C (armed)</u>
November	72.8%	72.4%
December	67.7%	65.7%
January	73.2%	62.6%

b. Aircraft mission ready availability during the same period was as follows:⁵

	<u>UH-1B/D</u>	<u>UH-1B/C (armed)</u>
November	60.6%	65.2%
December	57.1%	54.9%
January	62.2%	40.8%

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c. Percentage of aircraft deadlined for parts (EDP) during the reporting period was as follows:⁴

	<u>UH-1B/D</u>	<u>UH-1B/C (armed)</u>
November	18.4%	16.9%
December	13.3%	20.2%
January	10.1%	23.1%

d. Availability has decreased and EDP rates have increased for armed helicopters through the quarter because the UH-1C's of the battalion entered their first 300 hours hot-end inspection. The majority of EDPs have been for engine parts and teflon bearings. This hot-end inspection of the armed helicopters revealed more wear and tear of engine parts than observed on the unarmed helicopters. This is apparently due to continuous operation at or near maximum gross weight.

e. The mission ready availability of armed helicopters also decreased through the quarter. This is attributed to the installation of the XM-21 system and the installation of the M-16 system on replacement aircraft.

f. In the last three months the supply support from the Qui Nhon depots has improved. Due-outs are being received by the units and due-out releases are being received from the depots and Okinawa.

4. (C) Personnel

a. The shortage of aviators that occurred during the previous reporting period has been minimized during the period of this report. Assigned strength of aviators was approximately 92% of authorized strength at the close of this period.

b. Shortage of enlisted personnel reached critical limits during this quarter when shortages in critical MOSs are considered. Assigned strength of enlisted personnel was approximately 82% of authorized strength at the close of this period. Critical MOSs are:

- (1) Radio Telephone Operators - 05C20: short 4
- (2) Gunners - 11B20: short 59
- (3) Radio Repairman - 26D30: short 5
- (4) Avionics Repairman - 35L20: short 2
- (5) Wiroman - 36K20: short 4

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(6) Helicopter Mechanic - 67A10: short 32

(7) Helicopter Mechanic - 67N20: short 60

(8) Technical Inspector - 67W20: short 2

c. Personnel for critical MOSs have been requisitioned and follow-up action has been taken monthly.

d. The overall strength showed an upward trend at the close of the quarter. However, shortages in critical areas are not being alleviated. Personnel being received are not qualified in the MOS for the positions that are critically short.

5. (U) Other

a. On 28 November between the hours of 2205 and 2155 hours two explosions occurred 35 meters and 100 meters inside the Camp Lane perimeter. Investigation and analysis indicated the explosions were caused by rifle grenades. There were no damages to property or injuries to personnel. The camp was placed on RED alert for the remainder of the night. Gun and flare ships were scrambled. Negative sightings or contact resulted. There were no other incidents during the night.

b. On 21 January at approximately 0030 hours an explosion occurred in the 409th TC Detachment's area at Camp Lane. Minor damage resulted to an adjacent building and van. There were no injuries to personnel. Cause of the explosion is unknown although fragments indicate a grenade. A Korean EOD expert believes explosion resulted from a grenade wrapped in twine with the pin removed and buried in a container by indigenous personnel. Deterioration of the twine caused the safety lever to release and activate the grenade.

c. Continued emphasis has been placed on the improvement of perimeter bunkers and the building of personnel bunkers in the billet area. The billet area of Camp Lane is situated on a knoll. This has required the terracing of the area utilizing stone walls. Bunker spaces have been built into these terraces to provide passive defense against mortar or recoilless rifle attack. A command post bunker was completed during this quarter. This bunker also serves as the communication center of the battalion.

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SECTION 2 (C) COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Part I, Observations (Lessons Learned)

1. (C) Operations

a. Item: Planning of airmobile operations conducted by Free World Military Forces.

Discussion: The inherent problems caused by the different languages coupled with a limited knowledge of airmobile operations makes it imperative that aviation personnel are brought into the planning stage at the time the operation is first conceived or discussed.

Observation: Liaison personnel and command channels must be aware of this requirement, and alert for all operational planning which may involve aviation.

b. Item: Late changes in airmobile operations conducted with Free World Military Forces.

Discussion: A lack of full and complete understanding by the Free World Military Forces in the planning factors necessary for airmobile operations results in the belief that late changes can be made quickly without difficulty and confusion.

Observation: Last minute changes should be avoided because of the problems in coordination created by the difference in language. Liaison personnel and command channels must continually advise the Free World Military Forces on all aspects of airmobile operations.

c. Item: Control of pick-up (PZ) zones.

Discussion: During multiple lifts from the same pick-up zone it is often possible to load aircraft with the wrong load. Also, unacceptable delays can result in the PZ if a planned sequence cannot be maintained. When supporting Free World Military Forces the language barrier also causes possible confusion.

Observation: Marking the PZ with numbered stakes driven into the ground aids in the control of PZs. Aircraft loads can be placed at or directed to appropriate stakes and/or aircraft can be directed to these loading areas.

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d. Item: Artillery preparation of landing zones.

Discussion: When artillery is used to fire preparations there is the inherent problem of ensuring when the last round has been fired. There must be no appreciable time lag between artillery preparation fires and that of the gun ships and landing troop carriers.

Observation: To ensure the flight leader that the last round has been fired, pre-arranged smoke is used in the last volley. The color of smoke is varied and the color and frequency of its use throughout the preparation is varied to prevent any stereotype sequence.

e. Item: Coordination with FWMF artillery.

Discussion: Artillery advisories during the conduct of any airmobile operation is vital to the safety of all aircraft in the area of operations. When working with Free World Military Forces the language differences compound this problem.

Observation: This battalion places a liaison officer at the fire direction center of the artillery unit supporting the operation. This individual is equipped with a radio and transmits all artillery advisories on the battalion FM frequency, and assists in closely coordinating the artillery.

f. Item: Requirements for liaison in support of Free World Military Forces.

Discussion: The language barrier, difference in training, background, employment of forces, knowledge of airmobile operations, and incompatible communication systems make it imperative that adequate liaison be established at various command levels of the supported unit. Many problems have been averted by having liaison personnel at the proper place. In instances where liaison people have not been located at key areas, problems have developed that have confused or delayed the operation.

Observation: Experience has proved that major problem areas are averted when liaison personnel are located at the following places during an airmobile operation.

(1) Liaison must be maintained at division level for all operations. Normally located in the division's tactical operations center.

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(2) Liaison must be maintained at the tactical command post of the airmobile task force commander if other than a division size operation.

(3) Liaison must be maintained at the fire direction center or fire support coordination center.

(4) The pick-up zone control officer must act as liaison officer in the PZ.

2. (U) Training

a. Item: Troop exit on combat assaults.

Discussion: Troops are often extremely slow to leave the aircraft upon touchdown in the landing zone during a combat assault. This can be extremely dangerous in that the spacing between helicopters is normally kept to a minimum in order to get the maximum number of troops on the ground in the shortest possible time, and to lessen exposure time at a very critical stage. If any delays are caused on the landing zone, the following aircraft must slow down, break formation or stop.

Observation: Prior to the operation, ground commanders must brief their troops to leave the aircraft promptly upon signal from the crew. The crews should give the troops "get ready" and "get off" signals upon landing in the landing zones.

b. Item: Pinnacle operations.

Discussion: Instances have been observed when pilots have made approaches to the ground on pinnacles and have immediately bottomed the collective. This practice has resulted in damaged skids, fuselages, tail booms, tail rotors and main rotor blades.

Observation: Approaches to pinnacles, confined areas, and rough landing zones should be terminated at a hover sufficiently high to clear obstacles. This would give the other members of the crew time to warn the pilot of any hazards and recommend corrective actions.

c. Item: Unloading long objects.

Discussion: Personnel unloading long objects from UH-1D's have frequently started to stand them on end to allow them to fall away from the helicopter. This has resulted in near strikes of main rotor blades.

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Observation: When loading and unloading oversized loads, ground personnel must be briefed as to the hazards involved, and crew members must remain alert to prevent an accident.

d. Item: Radio antennas.

Discussion: During recent operations, vehicles with long antennas have driven under the rotating blades of a helicopter, and persons with long antennas on back packed radios have walked, unknowingly, into rotor blades.

Observation: All crew members must be on the lookout for these vehicles and persons as they approach the aircraft, and take immediate action to stop them before it is too late. The aircraft commander should plan his touchdown in an area where a vehicle is not likely to go. If a collision with an antenna is inevitable, the collective pitch should be lowered fully and little or no damage will result. RPM should also be maintained as an immediate departure may avert a strike. Ground commanders would be reminded to advise their personnel of the hazards of driving near helicopters, and walking under the rotor blades while an antenna is attached to their radio.

e. Item: ROK Army Aviation Training.

Discussion: In late October this battalion was tasked for the mission of conducting familiarization training for eleven Korean aviators and nine enlisted mechanics. This training started on 2 November, ten days after the original warning order. Korean personnel were experienced in fixed wing aircraft but did not have any previous rotary wing experience. Allocation of aircraft was not increased for this training and aircraft assets allocated for the support of the Korean divisions had to be used. The original concept of this program was to provide the aviators ten hours of familiarization to include take-offs, landings, hovering, and traffic pattern work followed by fifteen hours flying as co-pilot on service missions other than combat assaults. Training for the enlisted men was to consist of maintenance OJT. Because of the short period of time originally programmed for this training, and the twenty-five flying hours to be flown by each of the eleven aviators, the aviators were immediately placed in the cockpit. The fact that training aircraft had to come from aircraft assets already allocated to the Korean divisions hampered the program. Divisions did not want to utilize aircraft for training at the expense of tactical requirements during period of low aircraft availability. One major aircraft accident resulted during this training during the period of this report.

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Observation:

(1) It is unrealistic to train personnel not rated in category (rotary wing) without first conducting a complete ground school to provide a foundation for flight training.

(2) When conducting such a training course for Free World Military Forces where a language barrier exists, English instruction should be given first before any other instruction is presented.

(3) Units to conduct this training must be given adequate time to prepare. Time is needed to translate documents, obtain or fabricate training aids, and prepare lesson outlines.

(4) Aircraft must be allocated for this training. Units cannot be expected to draw-down on aircraft allocations to support this requirement in a tactical environment if the directing headquarters does not assign a priority or make allowances for this training.

f. Item: Free World Military Forces often do not understand the capabilities, limitations, and employment of the helicopter.

Discussion: This is occasionally the first time a unit has worked with a helicopter. Consequently, they do not know the principles of loading, effect of center of gravity, weight limitations, rigging of sling loads, hook-up of external loads, and general principles of employment.

Observation: An orientation course presented to selected individuals of all units using or anticipating the use of helicopters will alleviate this lack of knowledge and misunderstanding.

3. (U) Logistics

Item: Reduced time life of flight control bearings.

Discussion: Dust and sand collecting on bearing surfaces have caused most of the premature failure of bearings.

Observation: Bearing life can be increased by purging and lubricating on a daily basis. Spraying the main rotor hub and tail rotor hub with water each day washes away dirt and sand that would otherwise collect on bearing surfaces. After washing with water the area is wiped clean and the bearing purged.

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Part II, Recommendations

1. (U) Personnel

a. Problem: Personnel stationed at Da Nang and Pleiku (282nd Avn Co) are scheduled for R&R out of Cam Ranh Bay. Excessive time is lost ensuring that individuals meet their reporting dates because scheduled transportation from Da Nang and Pleiku to Cam Ranh Bay is not reliable. However, the scheduled service from Pleiku to Da Nang is excellent and presents no problem.

Recommendation: Personnel of the 282nd Aviation Company at Da Nang or Pleiku be scheduled out of Da Nang when going on R&R.

b. Problem: There were numerous occasions during the past three months when unqualified personnel were assigned to fill the position of door gunners on UH-1 helicopters. The unqualified personnel came from a myriad of MOS's, e.g., clerical personnel, engineer personnel, automotive mechanics, in totally unrelated fields of endeavor. This placed an additional burden on the unit to train and qualify personnel during a period when the unit was undergoing a severe personnel turbulence from normal losses. This problem is magnified more when the personnel can not pass the flight physical or they later decide, after their training is well underway, that they do not want any part of flying.

Recommendation: That increased emphasis be placed on the screening of personnel to fill the door gunner positions with stress on seeking those individuals that have had practical experience with automatic weapons and indicate a desire for such duty.

2. (U) Operations

Problem: Aircraft assets are allocated to supported units by aircraft on a daily basis rather than by mission. When assets are allocated by aircraft, the aviation unit does not have any flexibility in its operation. Aviation units must allocate aircraft to the supported unit with almost complete disregard for the mission requirements and maintenance programming. Allocation of a given number of aircraft on a daily basis prohibits the unit from scheduling aircraft to maintain intervals for scheduled maintenance. Consequently, units have periods of acceptable availability followed by periods of low aircraft availability because the majority of aircraft enter maintenance simultaneously. The problem is aggravated by the supported unit. Knowing they have a specific number of aircraft per day they tend to utilize these aircraft every day all day. Even though they may not utilize the aircraft all day the aircraft has been scheduled and programmed maintenance cannot be accomplished. This method of allocation places the

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aviation unit under the burden of providing flyable aircraft all day. Aircraft allocated on a mission basis requires the supported unit to plan, assign priorities, and list in advance what cargo or troops are to be airlifted. The aviation unit must also plan to determine how best to accomplish the mission, how many aircraft and sorties will be needed. This required planning at the unit level will inject a new sense of professionalism at this level. The present method is the easiest planning method but is the most inflexible at performing level. The assignment of missions to aviation units will allow the unit to manage and program their own assets to accomplish the mission. The increased flexibility to plan, utilize assets, and program maintenance will increase aircraft availability and unit capability.

Recommendation: That aviation support be allocated on a mission basis.

3. (U) Training

Problem: Standardization rides are required of pilots upon initial assignment to a unit and within every ninety days thereafter. However, there are no requirements for crew member standardization rides for crew chiefs and door gunners. Crew chiefs and door gunners form a very important part of a helicopter crew but are not required to participate in a crew proficiency check ride of any sort, other than what is given by individual units. The UH-1 helicopter is a crew served vehicle in every sense of the word but specific crew duties are not clearly standardized. This has been alleviated somewhat by assigning specific crews to specific aircraft but this does not always prove out satisfactorily as minor crew changes occur daily.

Recommendations:

a. That the standardization rides given pilots include the aircraft crew members.

b. That specific standardized crew duty instructions be developed for the gunner, crew chief, pilot, and aircraft commander.

c. That the standardization rides mentioned above include a crew proficiency check ride that would allow an instructor to observe the entire crew performing on a given type mission. To facilitate this it is recommended that a check list be developed that could be used by the check pilot to note the areas where crew development would be needed. A normal mission could serve very well for this crew proficiency check ride provided a designated area could be utilized for practical gun target engagement.

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4. (U) Maintenance

a. Problem: Several instances of XM-23 malfunctions have occurred when firing straight to the front. These malfunctions have been attributed to faults in the feeder chute design. In no instance was a malfunction of the weapon found. Crews and maintenance personnel have not been able to find an acceptable solution. Procedures have been established to ensure feeder chutes are clean and without kinks.

Recommendation: That test and evaluation personnel conduct tests to determine the cause of the malfunction when firing straight ahead.

b. Problem: Passengers frequently request to converse with the pilot. This is done on reconnaissance, command and control, and VIP missions. This is occasionally accomplished by using another crew member's equipment. This results in communications being severed between crew members. Also, signal distribution panels are presently located in positions difficult for the crew chief or gunner to reach.

Recommendation: That UH-1D helicopters be equipped with two additional signal distribution panels and outlets installed over the crew chief and gunner's seat. These would be better located for use by the crew chief and gunner, and would free the other panels for use by passengers when needed.

2 Incl

1. Bibliography
2. Organizational Structure Chart

William R Ponder
WILLIAM R PONDER
LTC Armor
Commanding

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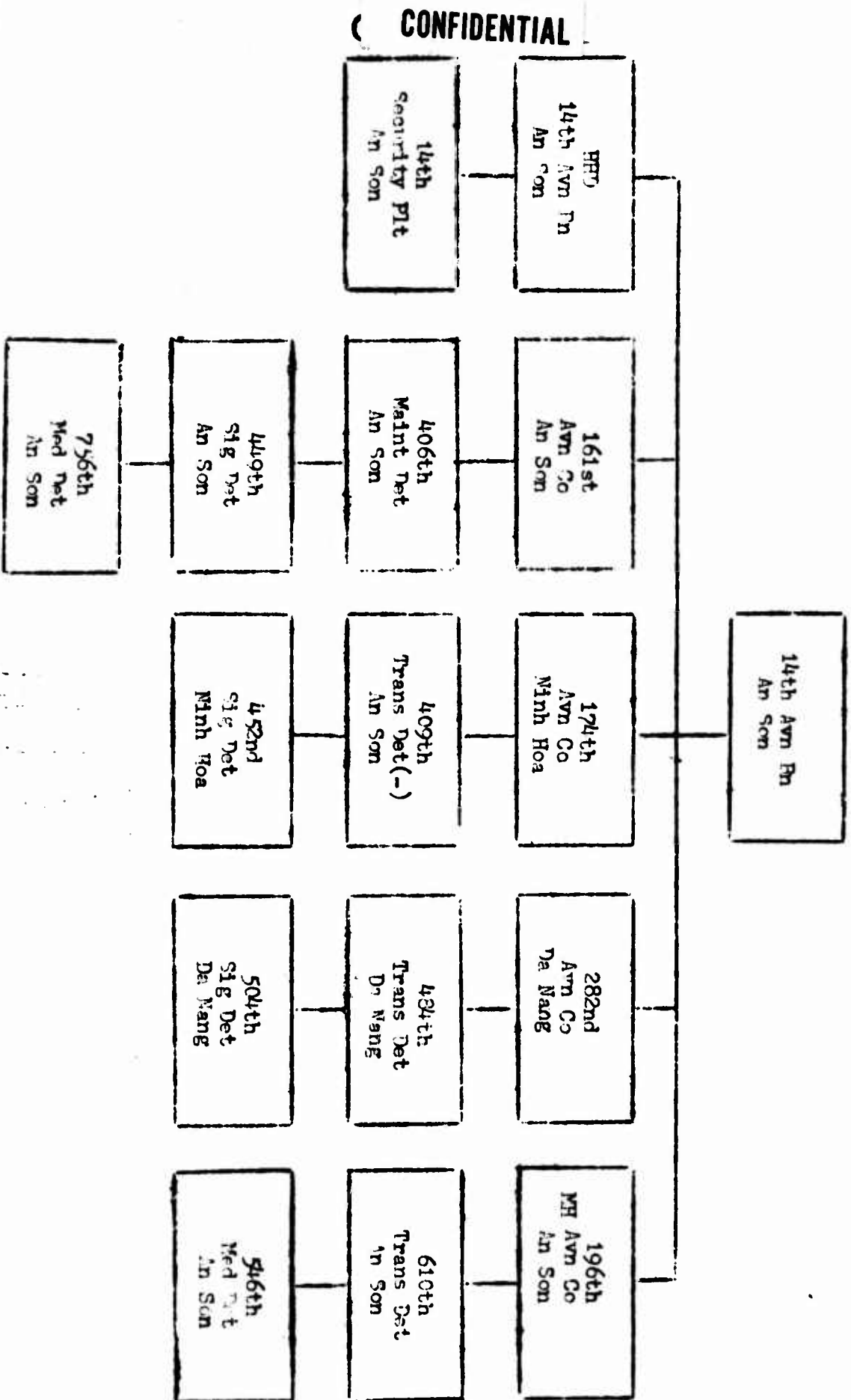
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2. Joint Services Anti-Aircraft Fire Incident and Damage Report
3. US Army Casualty Report (USARV Form 130R)
4. Army Aircraft Inventory, Status, and Flying Time (DA Form 1352)
5. Rotary Wing Aircraft Allocation (17th Avn Gp Form 25)
6. Crash Facts Messages

Inclosure 1

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE CHART



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Inclosure 2

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(RCS CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS 17TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP, APO 96240 15 February 1967

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Headquarters, Department of the Army
Washington, D. C. 2013

1. The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion operational report for quarterly period ending 31 January 1967 is forwarded for information and action.

2. This headquarters has reviewed this ORLL and concurs with Part II, recommendations as modified herein.

Part II Recommendations

1. a. Non-concur. The new R&R system does not give the 17th CAG any R&R allocations that depart or arrive in the Da Nang area. Prior to consolidating all R&R departures out of Cam Ranh the 17th CAG had to coordinate flights out of Nha Trang, Saigon, and Da Nang. The Da Nang quotas were extremely difficult to take advantage of due to distance and communication problems. The new system is superior and causes only a few problems as mentioned. The majority of the 17th CAG personnel have little difficulty in obtaining transportation to and from Cam Ranh R&R Center.

b. Concur.

2. Non-concur. Units supported do justify the number of aircraft required for each day on a mission basis through I FFORCEV. Aircraft availability is scheduled to be 80%, however the mission schedule rate is only 62% of the total aircraft assigned. This percentage gives enough flexibility to allow the units to properly schedule maintenance. The commander of the aviation mission is responsible for planning and advising the unit supported by establishing proper liaison prior to starting the mission. The supported unit has its own mission and should not be required to get involved in the complicated aviation mission scheduling. This is our responsibility and will remain as stated in our mission requirement.

3. a. Concur.

b. Concur.

c. Concur.

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4. a. Concur.

b. Concur.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl
as

Franklin L. Wilson

FRANKLIN L. WILSON
LTC, Infantry
Adjutant

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